

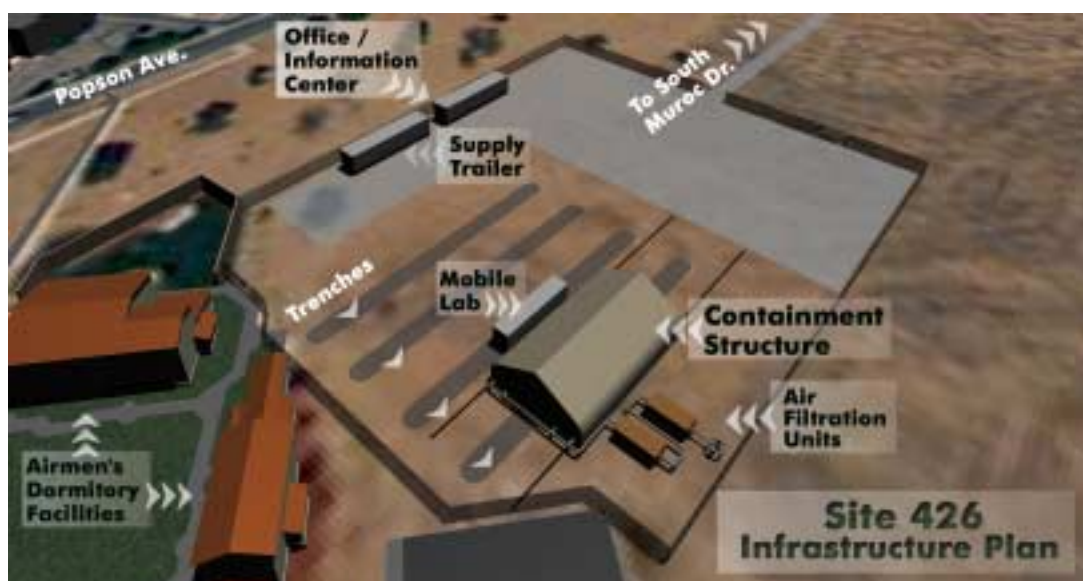
IRP Update

February 2002



This IRP Update describes the excavation plans for the trenches found at Site 426.

Work to begin at suspect chemical warfare site



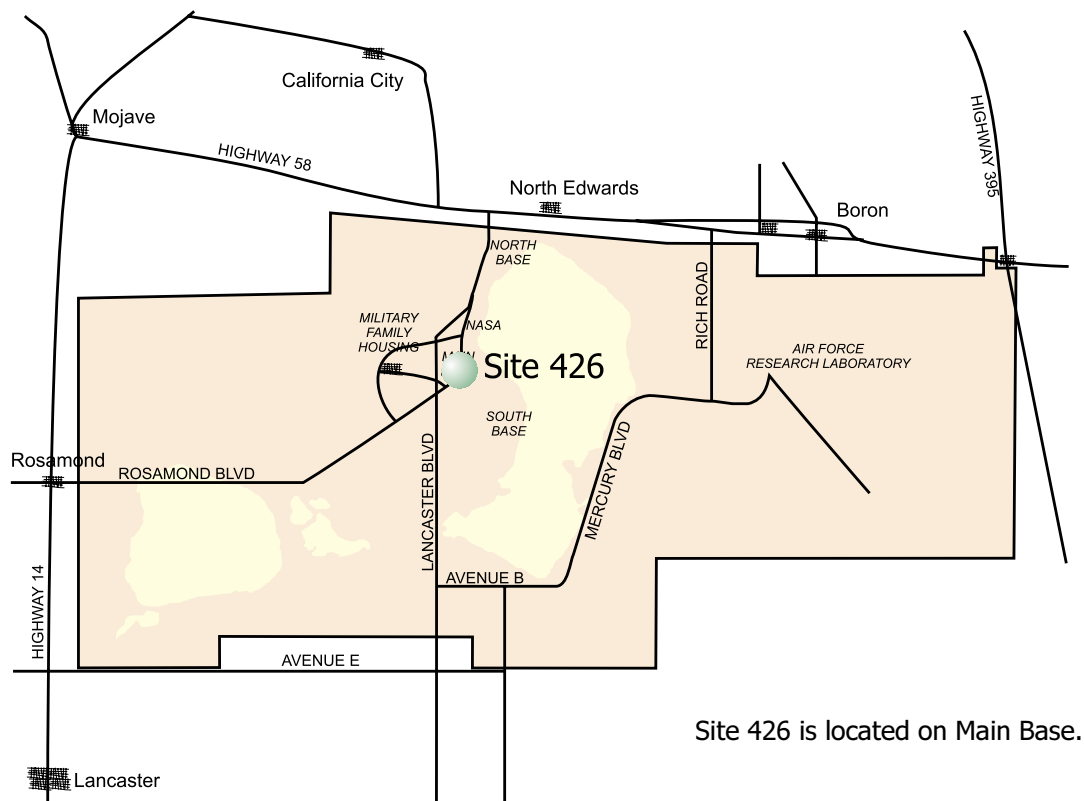
A temporary containment structure will be used when excavation of four trenches, suspected of containing chemical warfare materiel, begins in May. The 80-foot long by 50-foot wide by 27-foot tall temporary structure will be placed on moveable rails to travel along the path of work taking place in the trenches. Using near-real-time monitoring and a multistage air filtering unit, the structure is designed to prevent any chemicals uncovered in the trenches from escaping into the surrounding atmosphere. The structure will have to be moved about 11 times to complete the excavation.

The Air Force is set to begin excavation of some abandoned debris-filled trenches located near the new airmen's dorms. Preparations at Installation Restoration Program Site 426 will begin in early March and the actual excavation of the trenches will begin around the end of May.

The trenches, covered over in the early 1950s, were located at a chemical warfare materiel storage

yard and could contain chemical warfare materiel. Extensive testing using the best technologies available has been unable to determine the contents of the trenches, and the base has decided to excavate. Not knowing the contents of the trenches is unacceptable due to the proximity of the trenches to the dorms.

The site will be fenced and a temporary road and parking lot will be built to provide worker access to



the area. A containment structure will be built, which will consist of a metal frame with a fabric cover. The structure will be put under negative pressure with a powerful vacuum system so no air escapes the structure without being cleaned by a filtration system approved by the U.S. Army at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., the technical experts in this field.

A work trailer will be set up that will have real-time video of the excavation, fact sheets and other information about the cleanup. It will be the focal point for any questions relating to site activities.

Actual excavation of the trenches will begin around late May. The site will be monitored and medical support staff will be on-site during all excavation and material-handling

activities. All excavation will be accomplished using safety precautions and best practices established by the Army.

Excavation will be accomplished in small, 6-inch layers. Though extensive underground imaging has shown no shapes that appear to be ordnance, and although no ordnance is anticipated, the base Explosive Ordnance Disposal Division will be notified if any containers appear to be ordnance. Any chemical warfare materiel encountered will be secured by the Army Technical Escort Unit and will be transported to a safe location away from the base population. Any contaminated soil or debris will be handled according to established hazardous material disposition procedures.

For more information on this project or the Installation Restoration Program, contact Gary Hatch, chief, Environmental Public Affairs at (661) 277-1454 or e-mail: gary.hatch@edwards.af.mil.